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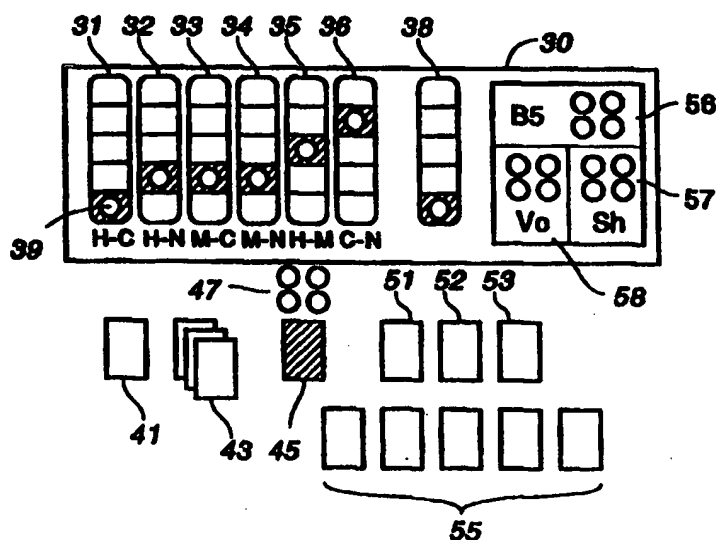
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(54) Title: GAME USING COLLECTIBLES AS PLAYING PIECES



(57) Abstract

A game includes one or more collectibles used as playing pieces. Collectibles include cards (10), miniatures, figurines, dice (70), stickers, buttons, coins, and the like. The game is played by assembling a playing deck from the card collection of each player and then selecting a predetermined number of cards from the deck. Each turn includes a series of rounds, specifically, ready, conflict, action, resolve, and discard, and all players must complete each round before the next round begins. Each round, particularly the action round, allows dynamic interaction of all characters acting continuously. Tension between factions is tracked on a play sheet (31-36). A player may discard as many of his cards as he wishes and draws a single card from his playing deck during the discard round. Additional cards may be obtained by spending accumulated points. There is no limit to the size of a hand.

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GAME USING COLLECTIBLES AS PLAYING PIECES

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

5 This invention relates to a game involving chance and strategy and, in particular, to a game employing collectibles as playing pieces.

 It is known in the art to use collectibles, e.g. baseball cards, as the playing pieces in a game. U.S. Patents 5,071,136 (Lott) and 5,145,173 (Crowder) each
10 disclose a game in which baseball trading cards are used to simulate some aspect of baseball. The game "Dragon Dice", sold by TSR, Inc. of Lake Geneva, Wisconsin 53147, utilizes a plurality of dice having various elves, goblins, and
15 other characters or symbols in the faces of each six-, ten-, or twelve-sided die. U.S. Patent 5,662,332 (Garfield) discloses a game that uses cards depicting various fantasy figures. As used herein, a "collectible" is an object exceeding some minimum intrinsic value such
20 that the object is collectible in its own right, generally as part of a larger set of similar objects. For example, collectibles include trading cards, miniatures, figurines, dice, and stickers.

 The context or setting of a game depends upon the
25 collectible. Collectibles can depict sports figures, historical events, characters from television programs or movies, or depict newly created fictional characters or symbols whose meaning comes from the game rather than from an outside source. The problem is to provide a game that
30 enables the players to engage each other in a unique way each time that the game is played and not have a predictable or inevitable outcome, as in tic-tac-toe for example. On the other hand, games of pure chance lose their appeal quickly for the more skilled player.
35 Preferably, a game provides a challenging combination of strategy, tactics, and chance.

Rolling dice, shuffling cards, or drawing cards at random are techniques used to introduce chance into a game. A problem with introducing chance into a game is the tendency to obviate skill. Alternatively, one must not
5 require such a high level of playing skill that the game is difficult to master. In the game described in the Garfield patent, for example, trading cards are selected from a collection to produce a library for playing. Thus, one has the opportunity to exert control over the outcome by the
10 selection of trading cards for the library. However, the trading cards for each starting hand must be chosen at random from the player's library and each hand is limited to a maximum number of cards at the end of each turn. These restrictions limit the combinations that can be made
15 of the cards in play and are believed to limit the skill level of the game.

It is known in the art to define outcomes differently for various combinations of opposing pieces, thereby introducing a certain amount of chance and psychology into
20 a game. The child's game known as "paper - rock - scissors" is a classic example of the outcome depending upon the particular combination of opposing pieces. It is desired to apply this principle to a game having many different pieces without unduly complicating the game by
25 the large number of combinations obtainable.

In view of the foregoing, it is therefore an object of the invention to provide a game using different types of collectibles for playing pieces.

A further object of the invention is to provide a game
30 in which a first type of collectible affects the play with a second type of collectible.

Another object of the invention is to provide a game in which each player can introduce a limited amount of chance into play by the choice of pieces in play.

A further object of the invention is to provide a game in which players need not play in sequence in a given turn, thereby increasing the tactical skill of the game.

Another object of the invention is to provide a game
5 in which the initial hand is deliberately chosen, thereby increasing the strategic level of the game.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

10 The foregoing objects are achieved in this invention in which a game includes collectibles used as playing pieces and a sheet or board having a playing surface on which a plurality of graduated areas are used for tracking events in the game. Tokens are stored in the graduated
15 areas to indicate relative power among the players in a game. In accordance with one aspect of the invention, two different kinds of collectibles are used as playing pieces, e.g. cards and dice. In accordance with another aspect of the invention, the game is played by constructing a playing
20 deck from the card collection of each player and then selecting a predetermined number of cards from the deck. Each turn includes a series of rounds including ready, conflict, action, resolution, and discard. The action round includes adding or removing one or more cards in
25 play. A player may discard as many of his cards as he wishes and draws a single card from his playing deck during the discard round. Additional cards may be obtained by spending accumulated points. The game continues until one of the players obtains a predetermined number of points or
30 the players declare a draw.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

A more complete understanding of the invention can be
35 obtained by considering the following detailed description in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, in which:

FIG. 1 illustrates a collectible card used in playing a game in accordance with the invention;

FIG. 2 illustrates a board layout for playing a game in accordance with the invention;

5 FIG. 3 is a flow chart of the game described in the Garfield patent;

FIG. 4 is a flow chart of the game known commercially as "Mythos";

10 FIG. 5 is a flow chart of a game played in accordance with the invention; and

FIG. 6 illustrates a die having faces representing a standard die, a custom die, and a collectible die.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

15

As an example of a game implemented and played in accordance with the invention, a game is described in the context of the "Babylon 5" television series. Babylon 5 is the last existing of a series of neutral space stations
20 where the powers in the universe can meet to discuss their differences. The game creates story lines in which the players can use diplomacy, intrigue, psychic ability, or actual combat to accumulate points.

In the game, each player initially chooses a race,
25 either the Earth Alliance, the Centauri Republic, the Minbari Federation, or the Narn Regime. In addition to the players, additional forces in the universe include two ancient races, the Shadows and the Vorlons, and Babylon 5 itself. Each player controls an Ambassador to Babylon 5,
30 who strives to build a faction devoted to increasing the power of his race and attempts to carry out an Agenda for his faction. A player may recruit allies from among the other races or try to rally his own people. One can use diplomacy, intrigue, "psi" (psychic ability), or military
35 conquest as tools and one can rise to power on his own merits or by siding with one of the ancient races.

Two to four players can play. Each player needs a deck of collectible cards relating to the race chosen for the game. The cards can be from a pre-packaged starter deck or from a customized deck, drawing from the player's entire card collection. Cards are obtained by sale or trade.

A player gains or loses points (also called power, initiative, or influence in a game) during play. Victory is obtained by being the first to accumulate twenty points. The Shadows, the Vorlons, and Babylon 5 also can accumulate points. If Babylon 5 has twenty or more points at the end of a turn, then the player with the most points wins unless that player is in the midst of a "Major Agenda," as described below.

If either the Shadows or the Vorlons reach twenty points, a Shadow War erupts. At that point, no player may achieve a "standard" victory; instead, a player must score a "major" victory to win. That is, a player must either have at least twenty points and have at least ten points more than each other player or fulfill the requirements of a "Major Agenda" card. If no player can score a major victory in the game, or if all players agree, the game ends in a draw.

Each player has a points rating that represents the strength and influence of his faction. During each turn, a player may spend points equal to or less than that player's current point rating to further the goals of his faction. Points that are spent during a turn are replenished at the beginning of the next turn.

After choosing a race, each player constructs a play deck. This deck contains all the cards that a player uses during a particular game. The deck must have a predetermined minimum number of cards, e.g. forty-five, must include one ambassador card, and no more than three copies of any other card (described below). A player's deck must have no fleet, agenda, conflict, or location

cards that belong to races other than his own. A player may, but is not required to, remove characters who are loyal to other races. For example, the Centauri player should not put many Minbari cards into his deck, though
5 some of the Minbari characters may prove useful if he can afford to pay the increased points that such characters cost.

FIG. 1 illustrates a collectible card constructed in accordance with the invention. Card 10 includes name 11
10 indicating who or what is depicted in graphic area 12 and generically designated in type area 13. Preferably all cards of a particular type relating to a particular race share the same background color, which is different from the background colors for other races and card types.
15 Types of cards include character, group, fleet, location, enhancement, event, agenda, conflict, and aftermath. These types are explained in more detail below.

Card 10 preferably includes additional information for playing a game. In particular, card 10 includes
20 description 14 of the character or item depicted. Corner 16 indicates the number of points required to bring the card into play. Symbol 17 is a mark that links the card of some characters with great forces in the universe, e.g. strife, destiny, doom, Shadow, or Vorlon. A player's
25 faction cannot include both Shadow and Vorlon marks because these forces are in eternal opposition. Area 19 contains biographical or other information on the character, location, etc. but has no effect on play. Area 21 includes a description of the effects available and any special
30 rules pertaining to the card. Area 22 includes various ability ratings. Cards with no indication have an ability of zero.

The playing field is the area between the players and is illustrated in FIG. 2 for one player. The main
35 component of the playing field is status tracker 30. This is preferably a pre-printed sheet or board that includes

graphics consistent with the context of the collectibles, in this case the "Babylon 5" television show. The status tracker provides a means for keeping track of the extant powers and effects in the "Babylon 5" universe. Tracker 30 includes graduated areas 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, and 38. Starting levels are indicated by a suitable graphic in each area, represented in FIG. 2 by cross-hatching. The number of graduations is a matter of choice. In the "Babylon 5" game, five levels are used.

10 Areas 31-36 represent tension levels of the six combinations of four factions taken two at a time. Area 31 represents the tension level between humans and Centauri; area 32 represents the tension level between humans and Narn; area 33 represents the tension level between Minbari and Centauri; area 34 represents the tension level between Minbari and Narn; area 35 represents the tension level between humans and Minbari; and area 36 represents the tension level between Centauri and Narn. Area 38 represents "unrest", i.e. public and governmental resistance to the actions taken by a faction (player). A single token, such as token 39, is placed within each graduated area to indicate level. The values represented are changed during play by the actions of the players. For example, a card played by a player might include instructions to move a token up to a higher area or down to a lower area.

The cards are arranged below the tracker as illustrated in FIG. 2. Card 41 is an Agenda card that lists one or more goals for a player and usually provides the player with some additional tools or techniques to facilitate achieving those goals. Achieving a goal produces points, as indicated by Agenda card 41. An Agenda card may be race specific or generic, open (placed face up on the playing field) or hidden (placed face down on the playing field). If race specific, the Agenda card may only be used by the player choosing the race indicated. A

player does not gain any direct benefit from having a hidden Agenda in play. A player may reveal a hidden Agenda during the action round, described below, and the Agenda takes effect immediately. An Agenda remains in play until
5 the player decides to replace the current agenda with a new Agenda from the player's hand.

Ambassador card 45 acts as a reference point in the playing field, in addition to identifying the ambassador. Agenda card 41 and aftermath cards 43 are place to the left
10 of Ambassador card 45. Tokens 47, representing the points or "influence" allotted each player at the beginning of a game, are located above Ambassador card 45. In the "Babylon 5" game, four points are allotted each player at the beginning of the game. As the points are spent to
15 accomplish some task, they are placed below the ambassador card to indicate the expenditure. Character cards 51, 52 and 53 are located to the right of Ambassador card 45. Cards 51-53 represent the "inner circle" of characters acting in behalf of the faction. Additional characters can
20 be added to the inner circle during play. Supporting cards 55 are located below Ambassador card 45 and represent additional characters, groups, locations, or fleets that each player can control. Additional cards can be added to the supporting cards during play.

25 Tracker 30 also includes area 56 representing Babylon 5 station, area 57 representing the Shadow force, and area 58 representing the Vorlon force. Each of these areas is given four points initially and can gain and lose points (or "influence") during play.

30 Each player selects his playing deck from his collection, subject to the restrictions listed above, and sets up his portion of the playing area as described above. Each player then selects four cards for his initial hand and shuffles the remaining cards, placing the cards face
35 down in a stack. Each player is then ready to play. Of the four cards, one must be the ambassador of the race

chosen by the player. The remaining cards may not include more than one card of any given type; e.g. only one character card.

The game is played in turns and each turn is divided into rounds: ready, conflict, action, resolution, and discard. In each round, all players must act before anyone may proceed to the next round. During each round, the players alternate playing cards and taking actions. The players act spontaneously, as permitted by some cards, or in reverse order of initiative, that is, the player with the fewest points goes first.

It is important to note that, unlike the prior art, play is not resolved or a score is not calculated after all players have acted once. As explained in more detail below, each player may modify his position during the action round and the round is not over until all players have passed. Each player may act several times during a round. It is only in the resolution round that results of conflicts are calculated and consequences applied, as determined by "Aftermath" cards. Attacks are resolved during the Action round as they take place.

A difficulty with collectible card games in general is that the terminology used by the industry is inconsistent. For example, in the "Babylon 5" game, a turn includes several rounds. In the "Mythos" game, each "round" includes several "turns." In "Magic: the Gathering", each "turn" has six "phases." The terms are not interchangeable and the play of each of these games is distinct.

FIG. 3 is a flowchart for the game "Magic: the Gathering" (corresponding to the Garfield patent). As can be seen the game is highly sequential, with little opportunity for extensive interaction. During Main phase, one player attacks and the other player defends by putting certain cards into play, then damage is assessed. Some "fast effects" may be used but the play is essentially over

after each player shows his cards, somewhat like the card game "War."

The game suffers from "rich-kid syndrome" in that one can buy sufficient quantities of power cards (heavily
5 damaging cards) to assure victory; see The Pocket Players' Guide for Magic: The Gathering -- Fourth Edition, "Notes from the Designer" by Richard Garfield, page A-3. The first player, if powerful, inevitably wins because conflicts are resolved sequentially.

10 FIG. 4 is a flowchart for the game "Mythos", as sold by Chaosium, Inc. of Oakland, California 94608. Each player plays one card or passes until all players have passed consecutively or one player has passed twice. Playing a card can be one of several actions, viz. placing
15 a card on the playing surface, paying points for an "artifact" and putting the artifact into play, removing an artifact, paying points for casting a spell. After all players have passed, the combat phase is entered, wherein each player allocates resources to specific targets. The
20 results of each combat are then tallied, points assessed and a new round begins.

FIG. 5 is a flowchart of a game played in accordance with the invention. A single turn includes five rounds with all the players participating in each round. During
25 each round, the players act in reverse order of initiative (low score first) or, if they choose, act spontaneously.

During the ready round, any cards that were rotated during the previous turn are made ready (set upright) again. A player may choose to leave a card he controls
30 rotated, to show that it is continuing the same action. This is known as sustaining an action. This is usually done with a card that is rotated to augment the effect of another card. For example, a player may rotate the card of a character having Leadership ability to increase the
35 Military rating of fleet card. If the player wishes to leave that character in charge of the fleet, the card

remains rotated and the fleet continues to receive the boost to its Military rating. Most cards may be rotated only once per turn. That is, the boost could not be applied to a second fleet during a single turn. All points
5 that were spent during the previous turn are replenished and moved back into each player's points area.

During the conflict round, a player may (but need not) declare one conflict by taking a conflict card from his hand and placing the card face down on the playing field.
10 Players with the option of declaring a conflict by other means, such as by using an Agenda card, may do so. After all players have decided whether or not to initiate a conflict, each player declaring a conflict turns over his card and may proceed to augment the strength of his
15 position by bringing other cards into play.

Any further required details (such as the target of the conflict) must be declared at this time. For example, the Kidnapping conflict is an attempt to kidnap an opposing character. The kidnapping victim must be named now.

20 During an action round, a player may only perform one action at a time. An action is doing anything that requires each player to rotate a card or to spend points. After all players have performed one action, the players may perform additional actions. A player may pass at any
25 time. Play continues until all players have passed consecutively or a player passes twice in a row. A player who has passed once may take a further action later in the round, as long as the round has not ended.

Actions include the following.

- 30 Sponsoring a supporting card
- Promoting a supporting character to the Inner Circle
- Rotating a card to build Influence
- Using an Effect that requires rotating a card
- Leading a fleet
- 35 Supporting or opposing a Conflict
- Attacking a character or fleet

Repairing a fleet or location
Healing a Character
Playing an Agenda or discarding an Agenda
Playing an Event

5 Bribing a Mercenary

The details of these actions are given in the rules accompanying the game. In general, one can increase the point count (influence), affect the outcome of conflict, or otherwise affect the operation of another card. The effect
10 generated lasts only for a single turn, unless a particular card indicates otherwise.

Unlike the prior art, an action can permanently affect subsequent play, e.g. by removing some cards. Taking action includes using cards in play and adding new cards.
15 The effect is to change the play from a poker-like game where each hand is tallied to more of a chess-like game where position and control are determined by the available pieces as the rounds proceed. Unlike "Magic", for example, one does not attack the other player, and the other player
20 does not choose what creatures will defend him. Rather, one may attack (in a military sense) a location or a character but the attack is incidental to the larger agenda.

During the resolution round, conflicts are resolved in
25 reverse order of initiative. After the results of each conflict are determined, and the scores adjusted accordingly, each player may play any valid Aftermath cards that may be in his hand, playing one card at a time, in turn, until no one wishes to play any more Aftermath cards.

30 In the discard round, all face-down (neutralized) supporting cards are discarded. Any card with a maintenance cost must be paid or the consequences listed on the card are applied. Cards that cannot be maintained but have no listed penalty are discarded. Discarded cards are
35 placed face-up next to the player's deck and may be examined by any player at any time.

Each player may discard as many cards from his hand as he wishes. He then draws one card from his deck. If desired, a player may spend points (influence) to obtain additional cards but may not spend more points than he has accumulated. Players who draw through their entire deck may continue to play as usual if they can discard a character from the inner circle. If there are no members left in the inner circle, then the game is over for that player. Each player checks to see if he has fulfilled the requirements for victory. This completes the discard round and the players return to the ready round if there is no victor.

There are several different types of cards that can be collected and played. A Character card depicts an exceptional individual destined to play a significant role in galactic events. Unless otherwise specified, only one copy of a Character card may be in play at any given time. Character cards may be defined as loyal to one race or may be neutral. All characters (except the ambassador) enter play as supporting characters, some of whom are promoted to the Inner Circle.

A Group card is a supporting card and represents a large number of minor characters, or an organization. Unless otherwise specified, only one copy of a Group card may be in play at any given time. A Group does not have skills but has an effect, as listed on the card. Most groups are restricted to a specific race and may be played only by the player who chose that race.

A Fleet card represents the primary military capability of each faction. Each player's faction begins the game with no fleets under its direct control. Only fleets may initiate a Military conflict. Some fleets are restricted and may not participate in conflicts unless they are defending against a Military conflict played by another faction. Fleets are supporting cards. Unless otherwise specified, only one copy of a Fleet card may be in play at

any given time. Most fleet cards are restricted to a specific race. For example, the Centauri player may not play a Minbari fleet.

5 A Location card describes a particular place. Control of these places gives each player's faction unique benefits, but they are also vulnerable to military attack from other players' fleets. A location has a military value that may be used only if that location is attacked. Locations are supporting cards. Unless otherwise
10 specified, only one copy of a Location card may be in play at any given time.

An Enhancement card alters, normally improving, the basic capabilities or effects of other cards. Some Enhancements may be played to modify an entire faction, or
15 even the entire game, rather than an individual card. Enhancement cards may be played during the Action round of the turn. Enhancement cards require a player to rotate a sponsoring character to bring them into play. Some enhancement cards are race-specific and can only be played
20 to enhance cards of the same race. The sponsoring character for any race-specific enhancement card must be of that race. An enhancement card stays in play unless it targets a specific card that has been discarded or unless it is removed by another game effect.

25 More than one copy of an Enhancement card may be in play at any given time but no two copies of the same Enhancement may affect the same target card at the same time.

30 An Agenda card lists a goal for a player's faction, as described above, and each player may only have one Agenda card in play at a time.

An Event card is played during the action round to cause the described effect. Events take effect when played. The effect of an event that modifies another card's basic
35 capabilities occurs immediately and then expires at the end

of the current turn. Most events require an expenditure of points, or require a character to rotate, or both.

Conflict cards are the primary mechanism for players to interact. A conflict represents a major dispute or
5 opportunity in the Babylon 5 universe. There are four types of conflicts: diplomatic, intrigue, military, and "psi". A conflict is precipitated as described above. Character cards representing an appropriate skill may be rotated to support or oppose a conflict, except that
10 characters do not have any military ability and may not participate directly in a military conflict. A character's leadership ability may be used to enhance a fleet's military rating.

During conflict resolution, the current strength
15 (points) supporting each side of a conflict is determined, and the faction initiating the conflict wins or loses. The outcome given on the conflict card is applied (based upon whether the conflict was won or lost). After the initial outcome is applied, Aftermath cards may be played.

20 An Aftermath card is played after any single Conflict Resolution. Through these cards, characters grow and change based on their experiences. They are used to tell the character's story, and show how his life is affected by his actions.

25 Each Aftermath card lists the valid targets for its effect. An Aftermath card is playable on any character who participated in the conflict, or is playable only on the ambassador of the faction who initiated the conflict. An Aftermath card may specify that a conflict must have been
30 "won" or "lost" or be playable on either outcome. An Aftermath card may specify a skill type, which means that a "diplomatic" aftermath cannot be used after a "military" conflict.

Most Aftermath cards act like Enhancement cards in
35 that an Aftermath card modifies the card on which it is played. Aftermath cards are discarded when the card they

modify is discarded. Some Aftermath cards cause an immediate effect, such as adding damage to a character or altering racial tensions. These effects are not reversed after the Aftermath card is discarded. No cards are
5 rotated or points paid to bring an Aftermath card into play. If the conditions for play have been met, an Aftermath card is played at no cost.

The invention thus provides a collectible card game in which each turn is more robust and dynamic than in the
10 prior art. Each player can modify his position during a round before the effect of each turn is calculated. A player can define a strategy by the choice of cards in play when creating the playing deck and when selecting the opening hand.

15 In accordance with another aspect of the invention, the element of chance can be further increased by including the roll of dice at particular points in the game. In one embodiment of the invention, the dice are rolled during the Resolution round. FIG. 6 illustrates three types of dice
20 that can be used, although an actual die would probably not be constructed as illustrated in the figure. Face 71 on die 70 represents a standard die having dots in various configurations to represent the numbers one through six.

Face 73 represents the face of a "custom" die; that
25 is, a non-standard die adapted to the game in some fashion but not part of the setting of the game. For example, the faces could be numbered one through three or have symbols indicating a particular outcome. None of the faces have characters, locations, or other indicia from the setting of
30 a game, such as the "Babylon 5" television show.

A "collectible die," represented by face 75, has indicia from the setting of the game and, therefore, is a "collectible" as defined above. In play, sets of die representing vessels of the fleets from the various
35 factions can be used to resolve military conflicts between or among factions. The vessels have different strengths

and abilities and the outcome of a conflict depends upon the combination of vessels rolled. As with cards, the number of dice in play can be varied, depending upon the number of points accumulated by a player.

- 5 Having thus described the invention, it will be apparent to those of skill in the art that various modifications can be made within the scope of the invention. As noted at the opening of the detailed description, the invention is described in the context of a
- 10 collectible card game based upon the "Babylon 5" television show but can be applied to any context or any collectible. Within a particular context, other changes can be made. For example, instead of a card as a reference point, one can use a different type of collectible for organizing
- 15 cards in the playing field. The cards need not be arranged about the Ambassador card exactly as shown. The particular numerical values for ability or cost to play are by way of example only. As described above, one type of collectible can be used to affect play with another type of
- 20 collectible. For example, an Enhancement card can affect the operation of dice representing a fleet. Dice can be used to determine the results of Combat or other interaction, rather than the ratings on the cards. Stickers can be used to alter the skills or effects of
- 25 cards or dice in play. A sheet or card stock defining the playing area can include status tracker 30 or the entire area illustrated in FIG. 2 replicated four times, once for each player.

What is claimed is:

1. A game for two or more players, said game comprising:
 - 5 a first collectible used as a playing piece; and
 - a second collectible used as a playing piece, wherein said second collectible differs in kind from the first collectible.
- 10 2. The game as set forth in claim 1 wherein said first collectible is a trading card.
3. The game as set forth in claim 2 wherein said second collectible is selected from the group consisting of: miniatures, figurines, dice, stickers, buttons, and
15 coins.
4. The game as set forth in claim 1 and further including a playing area defining a plurality of graduated
20 areas for tracking events in the game.
5. The game as set forth in claim 4 and further including a token, wherein said token is stored in one of said graduated areas to indicate relative power among the
25 players in a game.
6. The game as set forth in claim 4 wherein some of said graduated areas indicate tension levels between factions in the game.
30
7. A method for playing a game involving two or more players, each player having a collection of trading cards, said method comprising the steps of:
 - each player assembling a playing deck from his
35 collection;

executing a turn as a plurality of rounds including an action round, wherein each player may play or remove cards until all players have passed; and

continuing the turns until one of the players achieves
5 victory or the players declare a draw.

8. The method as set forth in claim 7 and further including the step of:

after assembling a playing deck, each player setting
10 up an initial hand by selecting cards from his deck.

9. The method as set forth in claim 7 wherein each turn includes the steps of:

15 readying cards for play;
establishing conflicts;
taking actions to support the conflicts;
resolving conflicts;
discarding cards and obtaining new cards;
wherein each player performs each step before any player
20 performs the next step.

10. The method as set forth in claim 9 wherein a player discards as many cards as he wishes during said discarding step but freely draws only a single card from
25 his playing deck.

11. The method as set forth in claim 10 wherein a player may buy additional cards during the discarding step by expending accumulated points.
30

12. The method as set forth in claim 7, wherein said step of taking action includes the step of using a card in play to eliminate another card from play or to impair the effectiveness of another card in play.

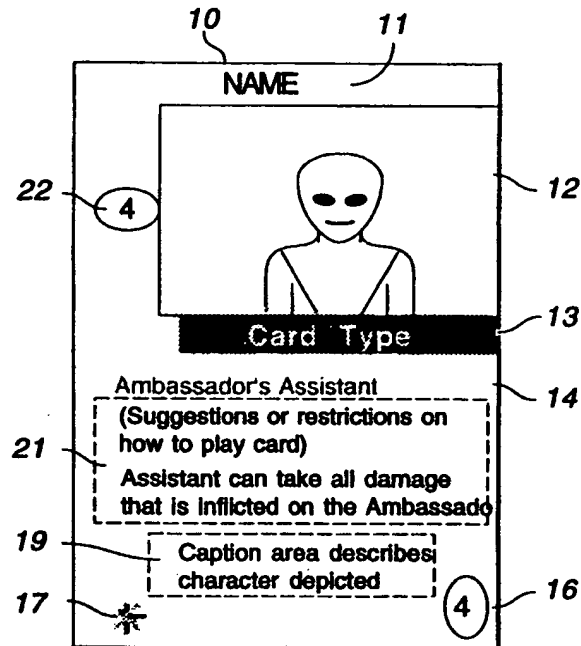


FIG. 1

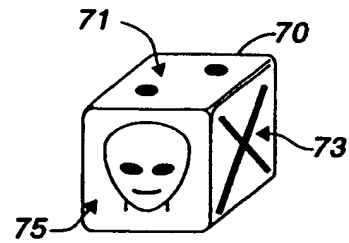


FIG. 6

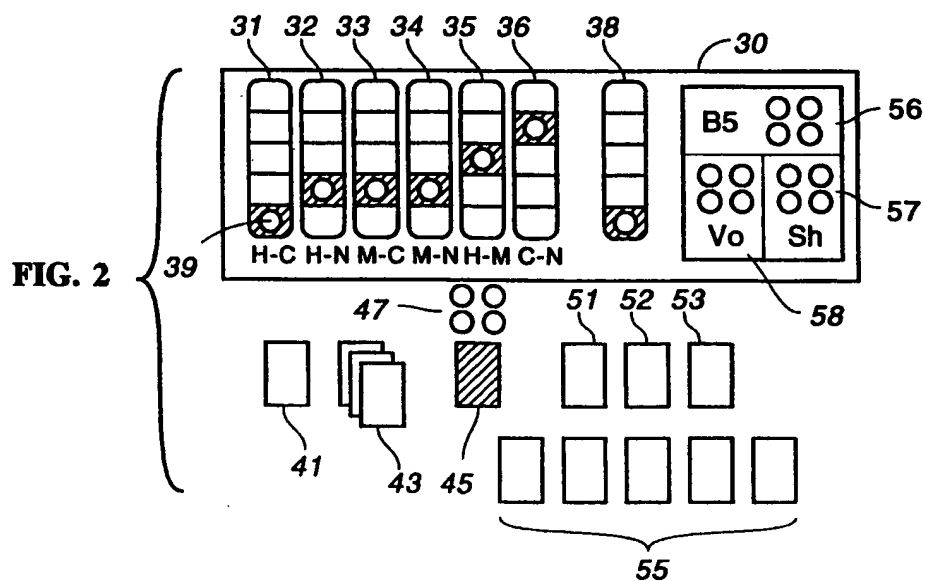


FIG. 2

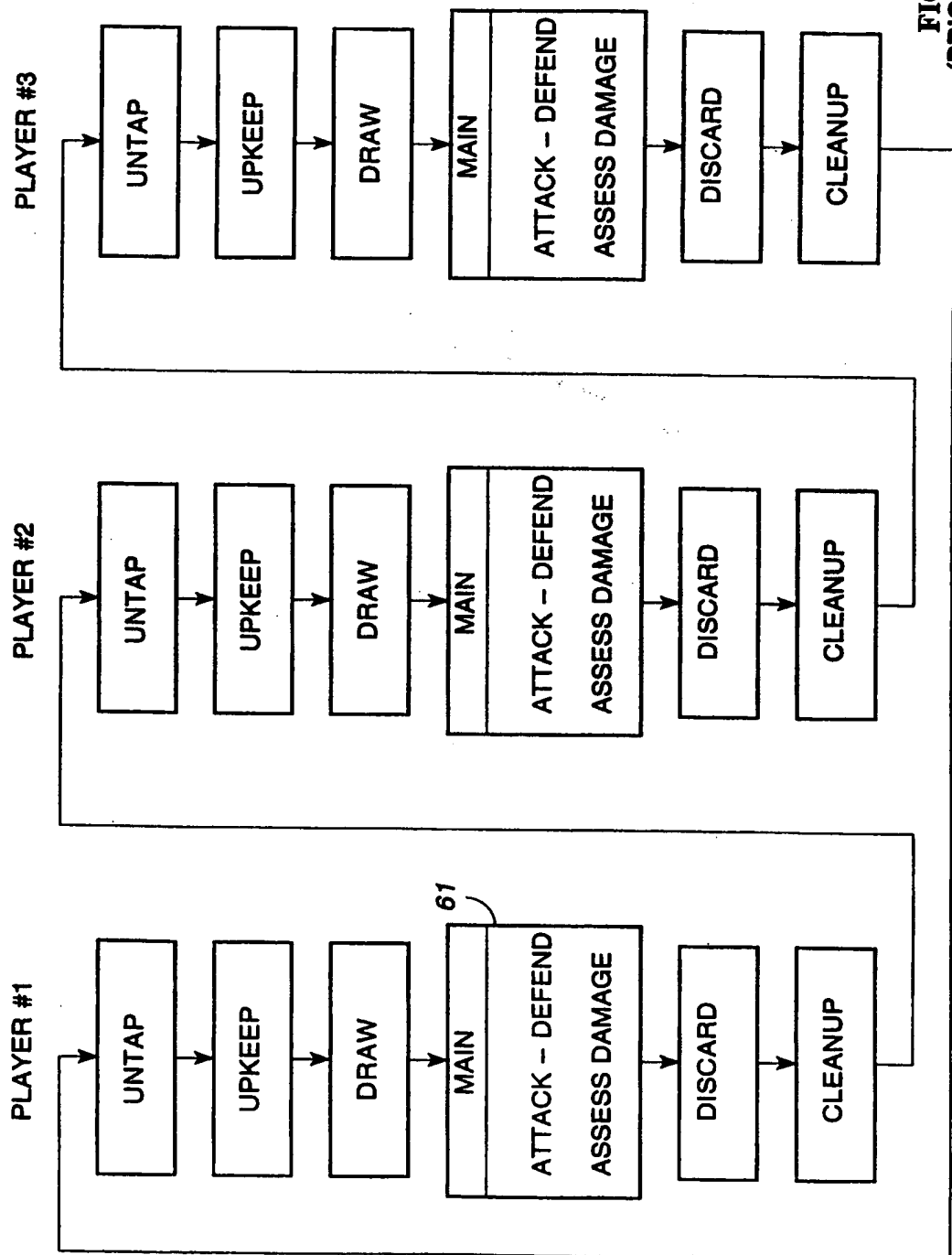


FIG. 3
(PRIOR ART)

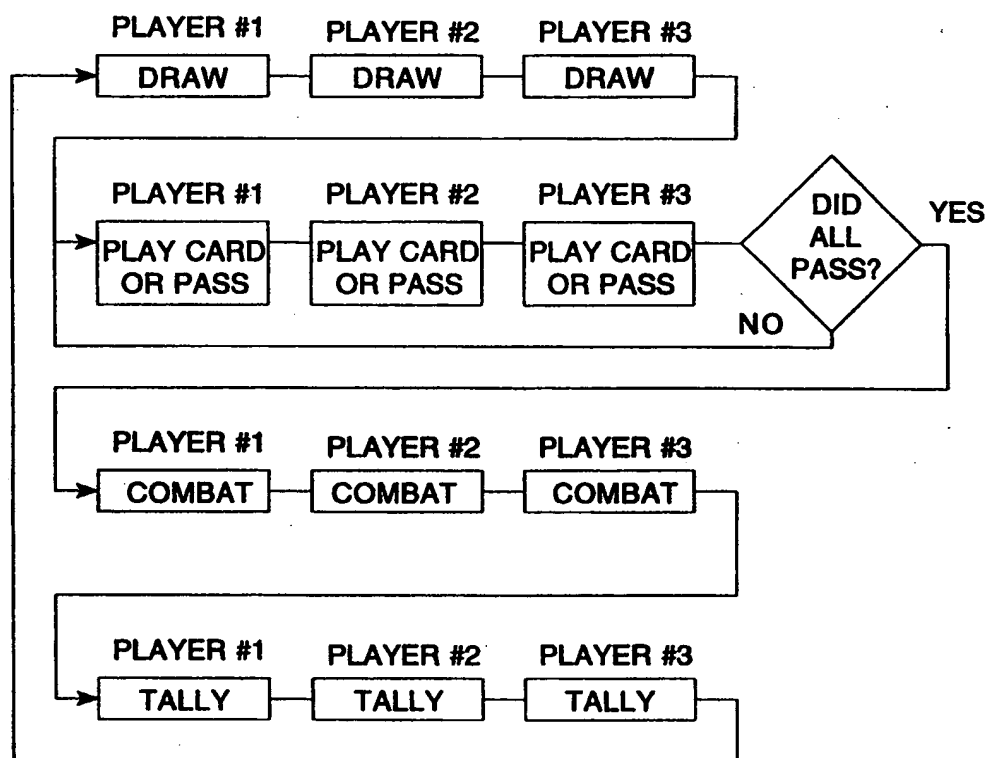


FIG. 4
(PRIOR ART)

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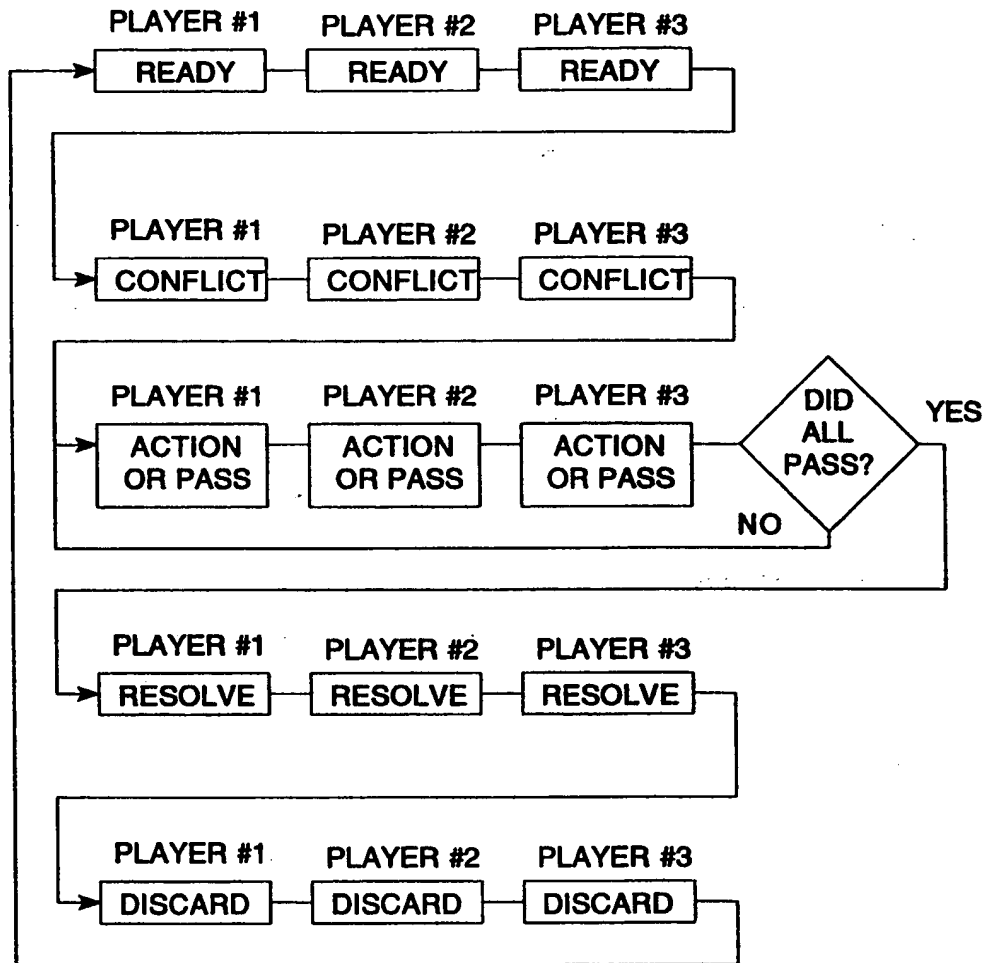


FIG. 5

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/US99/01080**A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER**

IPC(6) :A63F 1/00

US CL :273/308

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

U.S. : 273/308, 292, 298, 297, 302, 146, 244.1, 256, 255, 259, 262, 277

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	US 4,634,125 A (SEKLECKI) 06 January 1987, see "Example 1", column 4, line 45 to column 5, line 2".	1-6
A	US 4,979,750 (ENDRODY) 25 December 1990, see column 2, line 58 to column 3, line 25.	1-6

☐ Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C. ☐ See patent family annex.

* Special categories of cited documents:	"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention
"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance	"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone
"E" earlier document published on or after the international filing date	"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art
"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)	"A" document member of the same patent family
"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means	
"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed	

Date of the actual completion of the international search

18 MARCH 1999

Date of mailing of the international search report

29 MAR 1999

Name and mailing address of the ISA/US
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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/US99/01080

BOX I. OBSERVATIONS WHERE CLAIMS WERE FOUND UNSEARCHABLE

1. Subject matter not required to be searched by this ISA, namely:

According to PCT Rule 67, "No International Preliminary Examining Authority shall be required to carry out an international preliminary examination on an international application if , and to the extent to which, its subject matter is any of the following:.....(iii) schemes, rules of methods of doing business, performing purely mental acts or playing games".